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# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Friday, August 11, 1944

Subject: "G.I. Joe Will Eat Turkey For the Holidays". Information from distribution officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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It's a little early for most of us to think about Thanksgiving and Christmas, but already our Government has taken steps to see that every American soldier will celebrate those holidays with a turkey dinner.

Thanksgiving and Christmas have always been symbols of the ideals our soldiers are fighting to preserve. Last year, the Army celebrated with turkey dinners in slit trenches and foxholes. In some of the overseas sections, refrigeration facilities were not available, and the turkey was canned. But it was turkey! In some cases, the potatoes, soup and cranberry sauce had to be made from dehydrated products.

On the barren Aleutian Islands our fighting men tasted the first fresh fowl they had received since their arrival. The planes of the Troop Carrier Command flew turkey dinners to the isolated points of the Aleutians where the only living things natural to the environment are frozen tundra grass and scavenger ravens. In Australa, American pilots braved the changeable weather to fly over the jagged Owen Stanley mountains so that our boys in dripping, dim jungle outposts could enjoy a traditional holiday dinner.

On sun-baked tropical islands, American soldiers gathered together to eat their turkey and to sing. Frizzy haired, dusky natives watched while American G.I.'s sang "Silent Night, Holy Night" and a host of old favorites with a few new ones like "White Christmas" and "Santa Claus is Coming To Town" thrown in.

Thanksgiving Day on Tarawa was late last year. On November 30, Tojo's monkey men were still tossing hand grenades and our men ate K rations that tasted mighty good to them. But on December 4th, the wounded heros of Tarawa ate turkey dinners in



sick bay on American ships. It was a tardy celebration but one that few of those men will ever forget. Navy Corpsmen served trays laden with white and dark Tom turkey meat, giblet gravy, cranberry sauce, pickles, olives, plum pudding, fruit cake and iced tea. To top off the meal...every man who wanted one, got a good cigar.

Some of the men were lying down. Some had to be fed by the efficient corpsmen. Some were swathed in bandages...others were encased in casts. All were thankful to be among the living and headed away from the Gilberts...to be going back home where there would be more Thanksgiving days to be celebrated and a different kind of a Thanksgiving dinner to be eaten.

By all manner of transportation...ship, plane, truck, jeep, muleback, and even manback, turkey went to the Armed Forces last year. The Army Quartermaster Corps tried to see that no American fighting man or woman was missed whether stationed in North Africa, Italy, England, Alaska or in the hundreds of camps here at home.

This year, the Army is again planning months ahead of time for the holidays. The War Food Administration has cooperated by issuing a turkey set-aside order, which became effective July 17. Under this order, War Food Order 106, turkeys marketed and dressed in the major producing areas of our nation will be set aside for Army purchase until the quantity needed is obtained. The states most effected by the War Food Order include most of the states west of the Mississippi River, also Illinois, Wisconsin, and Delaware, plus certain sections of Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland.

While definite figures on the pounds of turkeys needed cannot be made public at this time, the amount will be great. It will be well over the 35 million pounds which were needed by the Armed Forces last year. And the amount purchased now will be in addition to the pounds of hen turkey purchased during April and May of this year. The turkeys will be purchased by the United States Army Quartermaster Corps





From then on, it's up to the Quartermaster Corps to see that the turkeys are transported to camps, stations, and ships on the fighting fronts of the world, and there prepared to be eaten. It's up to them to see that every officer and every enlisted man or woman in the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Corps get a fair share of the turkey.

Since the Army demand for turkey is greater this year, homemakers might logically expect turkey would be less available for civilian consumption. However, the turkey future is not a black one because civilians can still expect about 3 pounds of turkey per person in 1944. As a matter of fact there will be only about a quarter of a pound less per person than last year.

Here's another bright spot in the turkey situation. Turkey raisers report that they have enjoyed favorable weather this year and that growing conditions have been exceptionally fine. As a result, there will be 480 million pounds of turkeys available this year as compared to an actual total of 466 million pounds last year. Just by way of comparison, you might like to note that the average per capita consumption of turkeys in the pre-war years of 1935 to 1939 was only 2.6 pounds.

So the turkey forecast is something like this. Plenty of turkey for the Armed Forces...and enough turkey for civilians and a predicted traditional holiday dinner for every American.

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